

~~cue means for cueing select ones of said remote terminals to prompt selective operation of said voice communication means and said digital input means at said remote terminals to provide responsive signals;~~

~~status means to selectively indicate responsive signals and caller number identification signals automatically provided by said communication facility for substantially all said select ones of said remote terminals as (1) digital control signals, (2) digital data signals, or (3) audio signals, wherein at least one of said responsive signals or at least a portion of said caller number identification signals can serve as a digital control signal, a digital data signal, or both;~~

~~control means for actuating said cue means and said status means to cue and identify responsive signals in relation to said selective operation prompted by said cue means; and~~

~~means for storing audio signals encoded in a digital format, said encoded audio signals including caller voice data responsive to cuing by said cue means under control of said status means.~~

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33. (Amended) A voice-data control system for use with a communication facility including remote terminals for individual callers, wherein said remote terminals include voice communication means for providing audio signals and digital input means for providing digital signals, said control system comprising:

~~cue means for cuing select ones of said remote terminals to prompt selective operation of said voice communication means and said digital input means at said remote terminals to provide responsive signals;~~

~~status means to selectively indicate responsive signals from each select remote terminal as (1) digital control signals, (2) digital data signals or (3) audio signals wherein certain of said responsive signals can serve as digital control signals, digital data signals, or both;~~

~~control means for receiving said digital control signals for actuating said cue means and said status means to cue and identify said responsive signals in relation to the operation selectively prompted by said cue means;~~

means for storing and addressing data relating to said individual callers, including said audio signals for reproducing caller audio data at a remote terminal;

a plurality of audio response units for interfacing said control means to said communication facility, wherein said communication facility automatically provides caller number identification signals indicative of at least a portion of a caller's number and said status means selectively identifies said caller number identification signals as digital data signals, digital control signals, or both, at least said portion of said caller's number also stored in said means for storing; and

acknowledgement means for generating an acknowledgement number and providing said acknowledgement number to said individual callers and storing said acknowledgement number associated with at least certain of said data relating to said individual callers including said caller audio data;

an autodialer to facilitate a connection with a certain one of said remote terminals in accordance with telephone numbers stored as part of said data provided by said individual callers; and

coupling means through which said caller audio data is reproduced at a remote terminal.

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34. (Amended) A voice-data control system for use with a communication facility including remote terminals for individual callers, wherein said remote terminals include voice communication means for providing audio signals and digital input means for providing digital signals, said control system comprising:

cue means for cuing select ones of said remote terminals to prompt selective operation of said voice communication means and said digital input means at said remote terminals to provide responsive signals;

status means to selectively indicate responsive signals from each select remote terminal as 1) digital control signals, 2) digital data signals, or 3) audio signals wherein certain of said responsive signals can serve as digital control signals, digital data signals, or both;

means for testing caller identification data for said individual callers for approval as provided by said digital control signals or said digital data signals or both or for testing said caller identification data to determine the presence of said audio signals;

means for storing caller audio data encoded in a digital format;

receiving means for receiving caller number identification signals [from] automatically provided by said communication facility indicative of at least a portion of a caller's number as digital data signals, digital control signals, or both;

memory means for storing said caller number identification signals wherein data cells of said memory means are loaded in accordance with an operating format, said operating format being one of a multiple format configuration stored in said memory means, billing data with respect to said individual callers and a flag to indicate the presence of audio data also stored in said memory means;

an autodialer to facilitate a connection with a certain one of said remote terminals in accordance with telephone numbers stored as part of said data provided by said individual callers; and

coupling means through which said caller audio data is provided to a remote terminal.

35. (Amended) A voice-data control system for use with a communication facility including remote terminals for individual callers, wherein said remote terminals include voice communication means for providing audio responsive signals and digital input means for providing digital responsive signals, said control system comprising:

cue means for cuing select ones of said remote terminals to prompt selective actuation of said voice communication means and said digital input means to provide responsive signals;

status means to selectively identify responsive signals from each select remote terminal as (1) digital control signals, (2) digital data signals or (3) audio signals wherein certain of said responsive signals can serve as digital control signals, digital data signals, or both, said communication facility automatically providing caller number identification signals indicative of at least a portion of a caller's number and said status means

selectively identifying said caller number identification signals as digital control signals or digital data signals, or both;

control means implementing a stored program to control said cue means and said status means in accordance with said program and said digital control signals, to prompt responsive signals from each select remote terminal in accordance with said status means;

B2
memory means for selectively storing at least certain of said responsive signals from said select remote terminal including digital data signals and audio signals as selectively identified by said status means to indicate data provided by said individual callers; and

test means for testing to determine if a caller is a first time caller, said test means cueing said first time caller to provide caller audio data for encoding in a digital format and storing in said memory means.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully submits this response to the office action mailed on August 11, 2000. Claims 22-46 stand rejected. Claims 22, 33, 34, and 35 are voluntarily amended. Also, Applicant is submitting arguments here that indicate how the present claims are distinct from the art asserted by the Examiner. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

I. Rejection of Claims 22, 24-25, 27-28, 35, 40, and 44-46 Under 35 U.S.C.

Section 102(e)

The Examiner has rejected claims 22, 24-25, 27-28, 35, 40, and 44-46 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,797,911 to Szlam et al. (hereafter "Szlam"). The Examiner takes the position that Szlam discloses a voice-data control system with a "status means." To satisfy the "status means" recitation in Applicant's claim 22, the Examiner points to Szlam's "trunk interface control unit 10a13" and indicates that it selectively indicates responsive signals via Szlam's "voice recognition module 10a32." The Examiner also indicates that "*at least one of said responsive signals or at least a portion of said caller number identification signals can be seen as a digital control signal (controls subsequent operation, e.g. uploading customer information, opening new accounts, play next message, cancel/change orders, disconnect trunk, connect to available operator, a digital data signal (account information...) or both (caller number, DTMF or voice signal acts as a digital control signal*